

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended): A method for rapidly decontaminating contamination containing biological spores, comprising the steps of:

contacting the contamination with a spore germination composition comprising an effective amount of dipicolinic acid and an effective amount of calcium ions effective to cause rapid germination of the spores; and,

concurrently, applying a decontaminating solution to kill the germinated spores.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. The method of claim ~~1~~ 22, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 50 mM to about 90 mM dipicolinic acid.
5. (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~4~~, wherein the calcium ions comprise calcium chloride.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~6~~, wherein the spore germination composition

comprises from about 60 mM to about 80 mM calcium chloride.

8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 9, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 50% w/w to about 98% w/w water.
11. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition further comprises a surfactant.
12. (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the surfactant is selected from the group consisting of anionic surfactant and nonionic surfactant.
13. (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the surfactant comprises at least one carbon chain of from about six carbon members or more.
14. (original): The method of claim 12, wherein the surfactant comprises from about 5% w/w to about 15% w/w of the total spore germination composition.

15. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the decontaminating solution comprises enzymes.
16. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the decontaminating solution comprises a peroxygen compound.
17. (Canceled)
18. (Canceled)
19. (Canceled)
20. (Canceled)
21. (Canceled)
22. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 10 mM to about 150 mM dipicolinic acid.
23. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 60 mM to about 80 mM dipicolinic acid.